

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**REGULAR MEETING****Monday, June 11, 2001**

Present: June Bailey, M.S. Mitchell, Leon Robinson, Joe Todd, and *William Sanders

Absent: Trix Niernberger

Also Present: Mike North – Law Department; Marvin Krout and Tonia Fairbanks – Wichita/Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department; Lucy Burtnett; Larry Hoetmer, Doug Kupper, and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Mitchell called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. The minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 14, 2001, were reviewed and approved as corrected.

1. **Schedule for Public Meetings re: Riverside Park Improvements**. Requested by President Mitchell. Director Kupper reported that the consultants were completing the project cost estimates, and once they were finished, there would be further meetings with the neighborhood association. He said if the costs exceed \$5 million, priorities would need to be established for different project elements. He added that the plan also needed to be reviewed by the City Manager. He estimated that meetings should be held in either July or August. Lucy Burtnett commented that the deadline for the Riverside Booster was the 15th of each month.

*William Sanders present.

2. **Report on Schweiter East Neighborhood Picnic**. Director Kupper reported that he attended the Schweiter Park neighborhood picnic last Saturday. He said the neighbors asked when the new playground equipment was going to be installed and if the tennis courts were going to be repaired. He commented that installation of the playground equipment should begin by the end of the summer, with input on its location from the neighborhood association. He said other items discussed included a strolling path and picnic shelters.

Mitchell asked about repair of the tennis courts. Director Kupper responded that the doublewide court would cost approximately \$80,000 to replace and that it was in better shape than almost three quarters of the other 73 courts located throughout the City. He mentioned the possibility that only one court was needed at the park.

3. **Update on Grove Park Plan**. Requested by President Mitchell. Larry Hoetmer, Landscape Architect, commented that Goessen Livingston Architects were the consultants for the Grove Park plan. He said 80% of the design/construction documents were finished with an estimated completion date of mid-July.

Hoetmer commented that there has been a delay on investigation of the archeological site due to inclement weather. Director Kupper mentioned that Tony Scott, City Archeologist, had requested that the department provide a backhoe and operator to assist with an experimental site dig. There was brief discussion concerning relocation of a sanitary sewer line at the site. Mitchell asked when the plan was scheduled to go to the neighborhood and public for comment. Staff estimated late July or early August.

Tonia Fairbanks, Associate Planner, reported that the dig was rescheduled for Tuesday, June 12. She said Scott indicated he would complete his report immediately to be forwarded to the State for their review and comment. She said that provided no artifacts were found, the process should be wrapped up within a few weeks. Responding to a question from June Bailey, Fairbanks reported that staff has communicated with the State and received input from them regarding relocation of the sewer line and location of the east play area.

4. **Update on Sleepy Hollow Park Issue.** Requested by President Mitchell. Director Kupper commented that GIS has provided an aerial map of the entire drainage way for planning and review purposes. He said Park staff met with Storm Water Management staff to discuss alignment of the creek bed and plans for stabilization of the creek banks to prevent further erosion. He said several overlays were also developed for neighborhood review. He commented that one possibility being discussed was installation of a playground area east of Vassar.

President Mitchell asked if any neighborhood meetings had been scheduled. Planning Director Krout said he believed a meeting was scheduled with the Murdock Neighborhood Association sometime in the near future.

5. **Report on Linwood Park/School Meeting.** Requested by President Mitchell. Leon Robinson reported that the neighborhood group requested that the proposed school be located in South Linwood Park. Director Kupper said the school board wanted to keep the location of the school close to Harry St. He explained that many of the children who attend Linwood Elementary School live east of the canal route and use the pedestrian bridge to get to school.

Leon Robinson said another suggestion discussed at the meeting was purchasing the residential housing just north of the school and expanding at the current location. Director Kupper reminded board members that no monies were set-aside in the school bond issue for land acquisition. He also mentioned that the multi-purpose facility at the school needed a boiler for heating purposes.

6. **Land Donation – 25th and Wellington and Chisholm Creek.** Staff presentation. Director Kupper said this item was an effort by local citizens to recognize Pat Garcia, a former community activist who passed away last year, by dedicating a park in his honor. He said several parcels of land located at 25th and Wellington were bisected when Chisholm Creek was channelized several years ago. He said approximately 8 of the 15 property owners have been contacted and are willing to donate land for the park site. He said staff is proceeding with the land acquisition. He added that friends of Mr. Garcia have been conducting fund raising activities to construct a memorial, gate facade, fountain and plaza. He said the Board would have final approval of the proposed site plan. Responding to a question from June Bailey, Director Kupper indicated that the site consisted of approximately 2 acres. There was brief

discussion concerning the configuration of the proposed park, access to additional acreage north of the creek and possible inclusion of a small playground in the project.

7. **Botanica Expansion**. Staff presentation. President Mitchell referred board members to Preliminary Plan H and 3 maps of Botanica and the surrounding area included with the agenda. He commented that the Botanica Board unanimously approved the plan.

Director Kupper said this was an informational item and reminded board members of previous discussions concerning use of Sim Park land for the proposed expansion. He said one part of the plan created pockets of recreation/picnic areas along the river that were not currently available. He commented that the proposed plan would cost approximately \$60-\$80 million.

There was discussion concerning various aspects of the proposal including preserving the sand hills and trees in the area, removal of picnic facilities to accommodate additional parking, reconfiguration of Amidon Street, size and location of the conservatory and the location of emergency water wells in the area.

8. **Discussion of use of Sales Tax to Increase Park Department Budget**. Requested by President Mitchell. President Mitchell stated that the Park and Pathways plan adopted in 1996 by both the City Council and County Commission recommended that approximately \$53 million be spent over a ten year period for park land acquisition and facility expansion. He said this issue was again discussed during the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update. He referred board members to Page 22, Strategies – VIII.A1 which states *“Add a Parks and Recreation sales tax to the Park and Open Space Master Plan and the Park and Recreation Facilities Study. These funds would supplement general revenue funds in order to build more parks and improve maintenance of existing recreation parks/facilities.”*

President Mitchell admitted that obtaining additional sales tax monies for the purposes of enhancing parks and park facilities appeared to be very slim. He commented that financing of the Parks and Pathways Plan has not progressed at all since its adoption in 1996. In addition, he also referred to the Park and Recreation Facilities Study conducted in 1999, that recommended approximately \$15-\$20 million in renovation and maintenance projects, which the Board paired down to \$9-\$10 million. He said neither document has received the recommended financing.

On motion by Bailey, second by Joe Todd, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to request that staff schedule a workshop with the City Council and budget staff to discuss park and recreation funding.

9. **Director’s Update**. Director Kupper briefly reviewed the following items:

- **Country Acres 4th “B” Addition**. President Mitchell declared a conflict of interest and requested that 1st Vice President Bailey Chair discussion of this item.

Director Kupper reviewed the item stating that the developer Dick Hoskinson had requested that the Park and Recreation Department vacate two parcels of land, which were set aside for park and drainage when the area was platted, in Country Acres 4th “B”

Addition for development of a housing subdivision. He said the parcel located near 13th Street consisted of approximately 1 acre and the landlocked parcel located further south consisted of approximately 3 acres. He commented that he has been negotiating with one of the neighbors for access to the 3-acre parcel for maintenance purposes. He referred to an aerial map of the area. He also mentioned that there were a number of encroachments on both parcels.

Director Kupper reminded the Board that they had previously recommended that the parcels not be vacated. He said additional meetings have been held with the surrounding property owners; however, at this point the issue appears to be at a stalemate. He said it has been suggested that the City acquire the entire area from the developer for park and recreation purposes and he requested the Board's direction on that proposal.

There was discussion concerning whether there was a need for additional recreation facilities and green space in the area, particularly with reference to the approximately 640 acres at Sedgwick County Park, the Zoo and West Urban located just North of the site. Todd asked if there were opportunities to create different recreational activities than those offered at Sedgwick County Park. There was discussion regarding activities offered at Sedgwick County Park including fishing, picnicking, roller blading, bicycling, tennis, walking paths, volley ball, etc. June Bailey and Joe Todd suggested that staff make inquiries into the sale price, possible donation and/or trade.

- **Summer of Discovery/Pools.** Responding to a question from June Bailey, Director Kupper briefly reviewed the SOD program, attendance and scholarship activity.

In addition, he commented that although pool attendance has been down due to the weather, staff is confident that both McAdams and College Hill pools will remain open until Labor Day.

Director Kupper introduced Mike North, Assistant City Attorney, commenting that he was the Board's legal counsel.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m.

M.S. Mitchell, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk
Recording Secretary